

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 645

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mr. Victor S. Johnson, Jr., of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it was with profound sadness and an utmost sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of our State learned the passing of Mr. Victor S. Johnson, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was an outstanding citizen who performed his duties with extraordinary dedication and unprecedented devotion, giving unselfishly of himself, his time, and his talents for the greater good of his family, his profession, and the greater Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, Victor Johnson was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a native of Chicago, Illinois, Mr. Johnson received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College before earning his law degree from Yale University; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation from law school, Mr. Johnson courageously served his country in the Judge Advocate General's office, rising to the rank of Captain; and

WHEREAS, upon the untimely passing of his father, Victor Johnson graciously assumed the difficult role of interim President of the Mantle Lamp Company of America, the company his father founded in 1908 to provide superior kerosene lighting to rural America; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson capably continued to serve the family business full-time once his military obligation was completed; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, Victor Johnson made the bold decision to move the Mantle Lamp Company's executive headquarters and manufacturing facilities from Chicago to Nashville; and

WHEREAS, later named Aladdin Industries, Mr. Johnson continued to serve with acumen and alacrity as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer for the next thirty-five years, in

which position he earned the respect of the entire company for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, prior to his retirement in 1985, Victor Johnson was the esteemed Chairman and Director Emeritus of Aladdin Industries; and

WHEREAS, under his skillful leadership, the company expanded its business interests to include kerosene lamps, thermos bottles, school lunch boxes, electronic components, food service systems, and real estate development, becoming one of Nashville's largest privately held businesses; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was an exemplary and dedicated community leader who cared deeply for his adopted hometown; he was a prominent member of the Metropolitan Charter Commission for Nashville and Davidson County from 1957-58 and 1961-62 and was active in the campaign lobbying for the adoption of a metropolitan form of government for the city of Nashville and Davidson county; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson expertly served as the President of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce in 1956 and spearheaded the design and construction of a new downtown Chamber of Commerce headquarters; and

WHEREAS, Victor Johnson's business and financial expertise were duly noted, and he was appointed Director of the Nashville Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta from 1958-1964, adroitly serving as its Chairman in 1962; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, Mr. Johnson became a partner in a real estate development project to convert an 850-acre floodplain into one of Nashville's premier business parks known today as MetroCenter; and

WHEREAS, a civic-minded individual whose benevolent nature knew no bounds, Mr. Johnson was the quintessential "pillar of the community"; and

WHEREAS, Victor Johnson was especially proud of his peerless service to Meharry Medical College, where he joined the Board of Trustees and served as the body's Chairman from 1955-1983, when was elected a life member of the board; and

WHEREAS, he further displayed his admirable dedication to quality higher education as a member of the Board of Trustees for the George Peabody College for Teachers; he was

recognized for his noble efforts with the bestowing of honorary degrees from Amherst College, Hamilton College, and Meharry Medical College; and

WHEREAS, a refined and cultivated gentleman, Victor Johnson was a staunch advocate for the cultural arts in this state's capital and was an influential force behind the idea to create the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, for which he served on the founding board of directors and was the deserving recipient of the organization's Applause Award in 1985; and

WHEREAS, a man of vision and foresight, Mr. Johnson is also credited with proposing to Governor Ned McWherter that the State of Tennessee acquire the land north of the Capitol, which eventually became the Tennessee Bicentennial Mall; and

WHEREAS, despite his busy schedule, Victor Johnson donated his countless talents to several praiseworthy organizations, including the United Way, the Nashville Committee on Foreign Relations, the Atlanta Regional Panel of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, the Tennessee Historical Commission, and many others; and

WHEREAS, he was also a valued member of the Chicago Bar Association, the Nashville Roundtable, the Zodiac Club, and the Belle Meade Country Club; and

WHEREAS, he was was an active and devout member of First Presbyterian Church, which he served faithfully for many years as an elder and deacon; and

WHEREAS, Victor Johnson was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson enjoyed the loving companionship of his devoted wife, Nancy, and was a proud father, and a doting grandfather; and

WHEREAS, Victor Johnson will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by his wife, Nancy McKisson Johnson; his son, District Attorney Victor S. "Torry" Johnson, and his wife, Mary Leyden; his daughter, Christine J. Tyler, and her husband, Neil; his granddaughters, Emily, Caroline, and Anne Laurence Johnson; his grandsons, Sam and Patrick Tyler; and a number of nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, friends and colleagues affectionately remember Mr. Johnson as an individual who gave unselfishly of himself for the betterment of society and he leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mr. Victor S. Johnson, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our deepest sympathy and offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Victor S. Johnson, Jr.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.